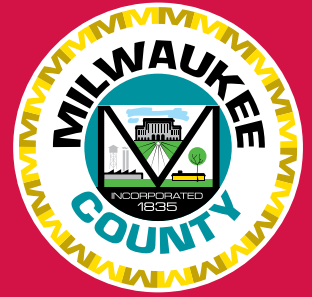




17<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT MILWAUKEE COUNTY SUPERVISOR

# TONY STASKUNAS

**COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEES**  
Judiciary, Safety and General Services, Chair  
Intergovernmental Relations, Vice-Chair  
Parks, Energy and Environment



## Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you on the Milwaukee County Board. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be your voice at the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

I thank all who have contacted me throughout this year on issues facing Milwaukee County. Hearing your input is very important in helping me represent you.

Milwaukee County has many excellent recreational opportunities to offer. Included is a list of printed resources available and information on some of the great attractions in Milwaukee County. Fall and winter will present a great chance to take advantage of all that Milwaukee County has to offer.

As always, please contact me with your thoughts or concerns regarding Milwaukee County.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas,

**Tony Staskunas**  
Milwaukee County Supervisor, 17th District

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## E-Newsletter

As a result of significant cuts to the Milwaukee County Board's budget, it will no longer be possible to mail newsletters. To save tax dollars, I will be starting a quarterly e-newsletter to update you on County news and issues.

If you would like to be included as part of this e-newsletter, please forward your email address to:

**[Tamsyn.Reed@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Tamsyn.Reed@milwaukeecountywi.gov)**.

I am hopeful that you will participate in this e-newsletter system.



*Supervisor Staskunas joined Supervisor Steve F. Taylor and Supervisor Mark Borkowski in honoring Mr. John "Jack" Bennett's service as the Franklin City Engineer.*

## CONTACT SUPERVISOR TONY STASKUNAS

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(414) 278-4247 • [anthony.staskunas@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:anthony.staskunas@milwaukeecountywi.gov) • [county.milwaukee.gov/Staskunas](http://county.milwaukee.gov/Staskunas)

## 2015 Milwaukee County Budget

On November 10th, the Milwaukee County Board considered the 2015 County Budget as proposed by County Executive Abele. After much discussion and debate, 59 amendments from County Board members were attached to the proposed budget and the budget was passed by a vote of 11-6. The final budget resulted in a tax levy increase of 1.31% from the 2014 tax levy. I voted “no” on this budget for several reasons. For example, I believe that the budget included too much bonding and will increase Milwaukee County’s debt load.

I am pleased that the budget as passed by the County Board restores cuts made by County Executive Abele to the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Department. The County Executive’s proposed budget would have caused a significant reduction in public safety and also led to more deputy overtime at a time when deputies are already working an unsafe and costly amount of overtime. I am also pleased that the County Board included additional support for the parks system, which will help to address some of the main items of deferred maintenance found in our parks.



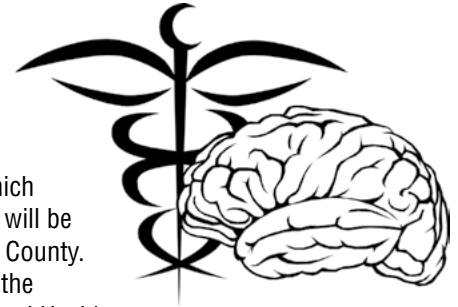
*Supervisor Staskunas discussing the 2015 budget with the Milwaukee County Board.*

On November 19th, the County Board met to consider County Executive Abele’s vetoes. After considering the County Executive’s vetoes, the final tax levy increase will remain at approximately 1.3% from the 2014 tax levy. I voted to sustain several of County Executive Abele’s vetoes that would have reduced the property tax levy by \$3.8 million and would have

reduced bonding by \$4 million. I believe that this increased spending and bonding will have a detrimental impact on the long-term financial situation for Milwaukee County.

## Milwaukee County Mental Health Board

With the passage of 2013 Wisconsin Act 203, the State of Wisconsin drastically changed the way in which mental health services will be provided in Milwaukee County. This provision creates the



Milwaukee County Mental Health Board (MHB). The MHB will have total and sole control over the delivery and funding of mental health services in Milwaukee County. The Milwaukee County Board will have no role in these matters and the County Executive only a very limited role.

While I do believe that the delivery of mental health services in Milwaukee County needed to be revamped and improved, I do have some significant concerns with Act 203.

First, Act 203 completely removes Milwaukee County residents, and their elected representatives, from making any decisions on spending for mental health care. The MHB creates and submits a budget to County Executive Abele. He then sends that budget on to the County Board for passage. The County Board does not have the opportunity to either amend or reject that budget. I am concerned that Milwaukee County residents have effectively lost control of a large portion of the property tax levy.

For the year 2015, the MHB increased the tax levy for mental health by \$1.6 million. The MHB did not solicit any public input on this budget and did not hold any public hearings relative to the budget. Act 203 does not place any spending cap on how much the MHB may increase their annual budget and your property taxes.

Next, the MHB is comprised of 13 mental health professionals. Regrettably, there is no residency requirement for any of these members and, currently, many MHB board members reside outside of Milwaukee County. Once again, I have concerns that decisions for Milwaukee County residents are being made by unelected, non-residents of Milwaukee County.

Lastly, I believe that there is a rush to close the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Hospital. While I do support treating mental health patients in the least restrictive environment possible, I believe that there will always be individuals who need to be treated as in-patients. In its rush to close the hospital, I believe that the safety of many patients and the public safety of Milwaukee County residents may be jeopardized by evicting patients who need in-patient services into the community.

## Sale of O'Donnell Parking Structure

Milwaukee County is now considering an offer from Northwestern Mutual (NM) to buy the O'Donnell Park parking structure for \$14 million. I support the sale of the O'Donnell parking structure to NM. I believe that the sale makes good financial sense for Milwaukee County. It will enhance our lakefront and downtown by revitalizing a poorly maintained green space on top of the parking structure.

The O'Donnell parking garage is in immediate need of structural repairs totaling \$6.6 million. Milwaukee County simply does not have the funds to make these repairs and the taxpayers should not be asked to do so when a private firm is prepared to perform these repairs.

Looking long term, the Milwaukee County Comptroller estimates that the parking garage has a useful life remaining of approximately 20 years. At that time, the garage would need to be rebuilt at an estimated cost of \$65 million or demolished at an estimated cost of \$11 million. Once again, these are funds that Milwaukee County does not have.

After giving NM credit for repairs of \$1.3 million, and after retiring the current debt on the parking structure, Milwaukee County would net \$5 million from the sale. These funds would be placed in a Milwaukee County Parks stabilization fund and would be used for desperately needed upgrades to many County Parks.

NM has pledged to renovate and reinvigorate O'Donnell Park situated on top of the parking garage. Like many Milwaukee County parks, O'Donnell Park has suffered from significant deferred maintenance and is a vastly under-utilized asset. Northwestern Mutual has committed to a renovation of O'Donnell Park that I believe will



*Supervisor Staskunas joined other members of the Milwaukee County Board at a public hearing regarding the proposed sale of O'Donnell Park.*

lead to a beautiful green space near the lakefront and will greatly increase the usage of O'Donnell Park.

In addition, Northwestern Mutual has also agreed to retain a deed restriction requiring that the current green space continue to be used as public park land. With this assurance in place, I believe that the sale of O'Donnell Park should proceed as soon as possible. A repaired and renovated parking structure and an updated and enhanced O'Donnell Park, along with the new Northwestern Mutual headquarters building, will help reinvigorate our downtown area and lakefront.

## Enjoy Free Milwaukee County Attractions!

Complimentary admission to Milwaukee County Residents only with a valid photo ID on the following days:

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <br>MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM<br><br><b>FREE the first Thursday of every month.</b><br><br>Free for all visitors.<br>Visit <a href="http://www.mam.org">www.mam.org</a> for additional information. | <br>MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM<br><br><b>FREE the first Thursday of every month.</b><br><br>Visit <a href="http://www.mpm.edu">www.mpm.edu</a> for additional information. | <br>MILWAUKEE COUNTY ZOO<br><br><b>FREE Days for 2015:</b><br>1/3, 2/7, 3/7, 10/10, 11/7, 12/5, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day & New Year's Day<br>Visit <a href="http://www.milwaukeezoo.org">www.milwaukeezoo.org</a> . | <br>MITCHELL PARK DOMES<br><br><b>FREE on Mondays from 9:00 a.m. - Noon</b><br>Excludes major holidays.<br>Visit <a href="http://www.milwaueedomes.org">www.milwaueedomes.org</a> for additional information. |
|---|--|--|--|





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Milwaukee, WI 53233

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## CONTACT MY OFFICE TO OBTAIN FREE MILWAUKEE COUNTY MAPS, GUIDES AND BROCHURES!

County Destinations Guide  
County Highway Maps  
County Golf Guides  
County Bus Route Maps  
Summer County Parks Concert Schedule  
County Zoo Information Guide  
Zoo Interchange Project Maps  
Milwaukee County At A Glance



## Change Coming to County Board

With the passage of 2013 Wisconsin Act 14, the Milwaukee County Board will now begin the process of transitioning to a part-time Board. The statutory changes include a reduction in pay for County Supervisors; a cap on County Board expenses, which will result in a great reduction of County Board staff; a change from a four-year term for Supervisors to a two-year term; and other changes to the legal authority of the County Board.

I am Chair of a Task Force which has been asked to review the way that the Milwaukee County Board will transact business in 2016 and beyond. The Task Force is comprised of other County Board members, the County Clerk, County Board staff, and a representative from the Wisconsin Counties Association.

The Task Force will consider how to effectively represent our constituents in 2016 with reduced staffing and reduced resources, as County Board members will serve on a part-time basis. The Task Force will study the idea of moving County Board and County Board committee meetings to the evenings as well as the associated costs and challenges with moving those meetings. As part of the process, the Task Force will review how other counties in Wisconsin handle business with a part-time County Board, and will also examine similarly sized counties across the country.



*Supervisor Staskunas listens to a presentation at the December 2014 Parks, Energy & Environment Committee meeting.*

The Task Force has already held several meetings and heard testimony from County Executive Chris Abele, and will continue to solicit information and ideas from other invited speakers. The Task Force will also hold a public hearing to solicit ideas and suggestions from members of the public. I anticipate that this hearing will be held sometime in February 2015. Please check my website for the exact date and time of this hearing. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions on how the Milwaukee County Board will be able to continue to effectively represent you.

## CONTACT SUPERVISOR TONY STASKUNAS

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